The Virgin Islands Consortium

Julio Rhymer Leaves OMB For CFO Position At Viya

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Ernice Gilbert December 04, 2018

The U.S. Virgin Islands' last Office of Management and Budget Director, Julio Rhymer, who served as the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority's chief executive prior to his tenure at O.M.B., recently resigned from the government job for the chief financial officer position at Viya, according to multiple sources with intimate knowledge of the matter.

There has been no announcement from O.M.B. or Mr. Rhymer about his departure from O.M.B., and attempts to reach Mr. Rhymer were unsuccessful. Viya has not issued a release regarding its new CFO.

Mr. Rhymer's time at O.M.B. might have been numbered, though, as the incoming Bryan administration is in the process of building a team of individuals to form its cabinet.

However, Mr. Bryan has spoken on numerous occasions of keeping certain holdovers from the Mapp cabinet whose tenures were determined to be successful.

The move to Viya comes on the heels of the private communications company's hiring of a new CEO, Geraldine Pitt, a telecommunications veteran who has worked for the top firms in the Caribbean.

“Geraldine is a highly experienced telecoms leader who truly understands the needs of consumers in this region,” said Brad Martin, a member of Viya’s board of directors and ATN’s executive vice president of operations. “Having spent 13 years with two leading wireless companies in the Caribbean, she has both the experience to give our customers what they want and the vision to accelerate our business. Geraldine’s demonstrated commitment to listening to customers and improving their experience makes her a perfect choice to lead Viya forward.” Viya is owned by ATN.

For Mr. Rhymer, the move to the private sector caps an eventful tenure working in government. He was thrust into the CEO position at WAPA after the removal of Hugo Hodge in January 2016. A search for a permanent CEO was launched, and in August 2016, Mr. Rhymer was given the job.

“In the end, we selected Mr. Rhymer from a field of three finalists to fill the vacancy,” said WAPA Chair Elizabeth Armstrong. Before serving as CEO, Mr. Rhymer had served as WAPA's chief financial officer from 2012.

Mr. Rhymer had encountered some difficulties during his CEO tenure at WAPA following an anonymous letter that was in circulation on social media said to be from WAPA employees. The letter called for the WAPA board to remove Mr. Rhymer for a myriad of reasons, among them favoritism, brash treatment of employees and an exodus of top WAPA employees who have left or were leaving the company, the letter suggested, because of Mr. Rhymer. None of the allegations were confirmed to be true, however, and Governor Mapp reaffirmed his confidence in Mr. Rhymer during a December, 2017 press briefing where he announced Mr. Rhymer would replace then-O.M.B. Director Nellon Bowry. The governor did say the culture at WAPA needed to change.

“There’s a culture in WAPA that we have to break,” the governor said during the same December 2017 press briefing. “We really want to get to a modern electrical system… some more folks in there will have to come out.” Mr. Mapp said at the time that he was not sure that WAPA employees who worked hard and were deserving of promotions were being rewarded for their dedication, and he expressed the same skepticism for credentialed residents applying for work at the utility.

Mr. Rhymer's tenure at Viya began in late November, a person with knowledge of his employment at the firm said.